

Behind the Star

Alexandria Sheriff's Office Quarterly Newsletter
First Quarter 2013



Track Star Renaldo Nehemiah Visits ADC

Inmates at the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center received an important message of hope from Renaldo "Skeets" Nehemiah, a former world class track star and NFL player, who addressed them in the jail gymnasium on Thursday, February 21. Best known for his world records in hurdling and for being a member of the Super Bowl XIX Champions San Francisco Forty-Niners, Mr. Nehemiah spoke about the times of adversity he encountered, like losing his mother to breast cancer when he was 14 and being unable to compete in the 1980 Olympics at the peak of his track career because of the U.S. boycott of the summer games. He used those and other examples to encourage his audience to persevere, to make good decisions and "to choose to be inspired."

During the 45-minute program which was presented in honor of Black History Month, Mr. Nehemiah spoke of Grambling's legendary football coach Eddie Robinson who reminded his players, "We've done so much with so little." These words, Mr. Nehemiah said, not only inspired a young quarterback named Doug Williams who would go on to become the first African American quarterback to win a Super Bowl but are words that today still offer an important message that even with less, people can achieve more.

Following his remarks, Mr. Nehemiah took questions from the audience of inmates who asked about his concern for young people and about his track career. After the program, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne thanked Mr. Nehemiah for his thoughtful words and Director Shennell Coit gave him an embroidered throw blanket and a challenge coin in gratitude for his time and remarks.

Inmates Inspired by "Skeets"

Channel 7 news covered Renaldo Nehemiah's appearance and interviewed inmates about the message they received. Jamar Dabney said that he would stick "next to positive people" in the future, and Jakia Carroll (below) said she wants to use her experience to help young people and prevent them from making the decisions she did.





Message from the Sheriff

The Sheriff's Office continues to proudly partner with other agencies to provide important public safety and community services. Already this year, our deputies have been involved in outreach services like SafeAssured Child Identification events, the Point-In-Time census of the homeless population and Project Lifesaver training, as well as traffic and crowd control support at the Presidential Inauguration and at our own local parades.

In addition to the work we do out in the community, we remain committed to serving those in our custody, ensuring that they have access to educational opportunities, to programs that promote sobriety, and to motivational speakers, like world class athlete Renaldo Nehemiah, who empower them to make better decisions.

I'm especially proud of the support our staff — both sworn and civilian — have offered to Officer Peter Laboy, taking up donations and volunteering to work at events to support him. Further, I'm proud of the wonderful support the community has offered to him and his family. It reminds all of us what a true honor it is to serve the people of Alexandria.

Thank you very much for your continued support.

James Paulsme

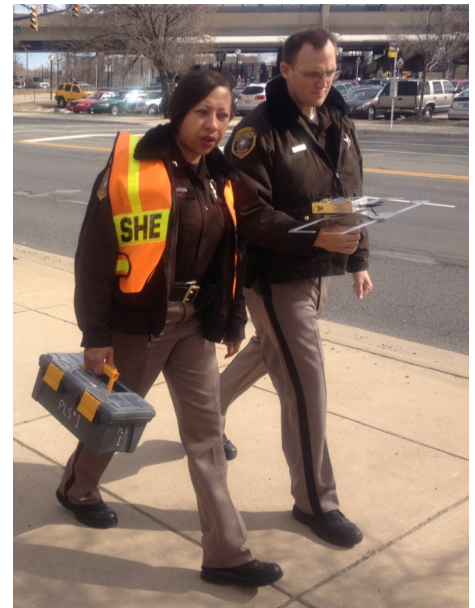
Deputies Become Project Lifesaver Technicians

Since 2008, the Sheriff's Office has coordinated Alexandria's Project Lifesaver program, an emergency response and search system to locate adults and children who wander due to Alzheimer's, autism, Down syndrome, and other related conditions or disorders. In March, 13 additional deputies successfully completed training to become Project Lifesaver electronic search specialists.

These deputies received classroom instruction on the administration of the Project Lifesaver system, including monitoring and maintenance of equipment and batteries and ongoing outreach to clients and caregivers. They also learned about the basic technology before heading out to test the tracking equipment themselves.

The testing took place on the grounds of the Public Safety Complex before expanding efforts city-wide. Another deputy wearing a Project Lifesaver wristband went to an undisclosed location and hid so he would not be visible to someone simply driving by. Working in teams, the trainees used the tracking equipment to search for him. They learned how to read and follow the indicators on the equipment and in each case, the teams soon discovered the "lost" deputy.

Now 25 deputies and one police officer are certified Project Lifesaver technicians. Many



of the deputies work in different assignments and on different shifts, increasing the likelihood that a trained technician will be on-duty should a client go missing.

To enter someone into the Alexandria Project Lifesaver program, the client must be a resident of the City of Alexandria, the client must have a legally responsible caregiver willing to place the client in the program, and the client and caregiver must abide by the conditions of the program and contract. To find out more or to apply, contact Lieutenant Brian de Souza by calling 703.746.5002.



Promotions and Awards

The Sheriff's Office held its annual Employee Awards and Promotion Recognition Ceremony on Tuesday, March 26. The awards recognize outstanding performance, community outreach, innovation, leadership and other demonstrations of excellence, and the recipients are selected based on nominations and voting from Sheriff's Office employees.

Guest speaker Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg praised the staff for their commitment to public service, and then joined Sheriff Dana Lawhorne in presenting the following awards:

Best Idea – Sergeant Lynn Oliver

Community Service – Deputy William L. Morgan

Esprit de Corps – Lieutenant Ronald Lawhorne

Uniform and Physical Fitness – Deputy Juan Guzman

Lifesaving – Deputy Brian Bell

Outstanding Performance

By sworn line staff – Deputy Marvin Pitts

By sworn supervisor – Captain Frank Milano

By civilian line staff – Ruth Graham

By civilian supervisor – Ramone Brooks

Unit Spirit Award – Administrative Services (above right)

Contributions by an Employee of a City Agency, Organization or Contractor – Anne Stutts, Alexandria Circuit Court



Following those awards, three deputies were formally promoted. Clerk of the Circuit Court Edward Semonian issued new oaths of office to Chief Deputy Wendy Webb, Lieutenant Ronald Lawhorne and Sergeant Mark Jessup (below).

During the ceremony, Chief Webb addressed the audience and thanked the Sheriff, her colleagues and her family for their support. Fire Chief Adam Thiel also recognized Chief Webb for her service at the Fire Department where she had

recently been detailed for several months on a special assignment.

Four deputies were recognized for being named employees of the quarter in 2012.

1st Quarter – Deputy Trina Graves

2nd Quarter – Deputy Kenneth Choi

3d Quarter – Deputy Dawn Jefferies

4th Quarter – Deputy Ernesto Arroyo

Finally, the following deputies were honored as pistol masters for receiving an average score of 99% or better in the Office's annual firearms qualification.

Undersheriff Tony Davis

Captain Douglas Schuler

Lieutenant Douglas Woehlke

Sergeant Michael Neebe

Deputy Marvia Anderson

Deputy Shawn Buker

Deputy Keawatin Carter

Deputy David Hoffmaster

Deputy Timothy Honig

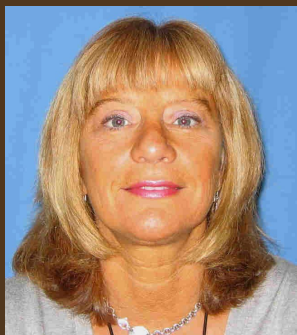
Deputy Dexter Mason

At the end of the program, Sheriff Lawhorne extended his congratulations to all the honorees and newly-promoted deputies.

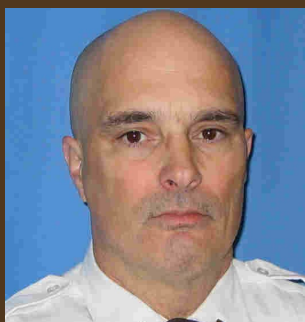


Four Retire from Office

Congratulations and best wishes to these recent retirees!



Inmate Classification Counselor Cindy Kapetanis retired on January 4, 2013.



Lieutenant John Kapetanis retired on January 31, 2013.



Deputy David Woodson retired on February 28, 2013.



Chief Deputy Tony DiCesare retired on March 29, 2013.

Working the Presidential Inauguration

Law enforcement personnel from across the country assisted in making the 57th Presidential Inauguration safe and successful earlier this year. The Alexandria Police Department organized a contingent of 20 officers and 16 deputies to work along the parade route.

On Sunday, January 20, the officers and deputies were formally sworn in during a training session at Bender Arena in Washington, giving them law enforcement authority in the District for this special event.

The next day they returned to D.C. and worked from approximately 4 a.m. to 8 p.m. Deputies provided security and crowd control along Pennsylvania Avenue (where this photo

was taken) near the Old Post Office Pavilion where thousands of spectators gathered along the Inauguration Parade route.



Support for Officer Laboy

When Officer Peter Laboy was critically injured by a gunman in February, members of the Sheriff's Office reacted quickly and offered support however they could. Several deputies quickly responded to the scene as initial calls for assistance came over the radio, helping to secure the scene, direct traffic and provide vital information about the suspect vehicle. Some searched for the suspect, and throughout the day, deputies assisted in protecting the crime scene and controlling the perimeter.

Later, Sheriff's Office employees responded with kindness and generosity. The Alexandria Police Association received donations from the Alexandria Sheriff's Association and from a collection by staff members to help support the Laboy family during Officer Laboy's miraculous recovery.

Several deputies also donated their time to provide security at a local fundraiser. Where police officers typically would have been needed to cover the large event at Virtue Feed & Grain on Sunday, March 10, Sergeant

Michael Neebe and Deputies William Durham, Audrey Eskridge, Earlene Pierre and Kevin Truesdale volunteered to handle security, and Deputy Craig Davie also assisted during his shift, so that members of the APD family could attend the event.



Photo: Alexandria Police

Parade Presence

The Sheriff's Office is always eager to participate in ceremonial and community events like parades. Some deputies and specialized units take part in the procession itself and others assist police with road closures, traffic direction and crowd control.



This year, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and the Sheriff's Office Honor Guard marched in the annual George Washington Birthday Parade on Monday, February 18, and in the Ballyshaners St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 2.

The Motor Team, with Lieutenant Brian de Souza and Sergeant Anthony Zygmunt, was also part of the Washington Parade and in the St. Patrick's Parade, Chief Deputy Tim Gleeson drove a Sheriff's Office cruiser.

Deputies Ernesto Arroyo, Wakeatin Carter, Joseph Runquist, Norman Thompson and Quentin Wade (above) comprised the Honor Guard team that carried the colors in the Washington Parade, and Sergeant Brian Grenadier and Deputies LaTonya Covington, William Durham, Robert Gilmore and Brian Wade comprised the Honor Guard team that marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade.



Police Chief Earl Cook and Sheriff Dana Lawhorne met at the staging area for the George Washington Birthday Parade shortly before the annual procession began.

Deputies George Gray and Walt Travers escorted Bryan "Bugsy" Watson, the Grand Marshal of the 2013 St. Patrick's Day Parade.



The Sheriff's Office Honor Guard and Sheriff Dana Lawhorne as they approached the reviewing stand during the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Deputy Isidro Battle, at the intersection of Wilkes and South St. Asaph streets, was one of fifteen deputies who worked traffic posts during the George Washington Birthday Parade.



Alexandria Sheriff's Office:



Chief Deputy Tim Gleeson, Deputy John O'Hara and K9 Sherman visited with approximately 20 Daisy Girl Scouts at Charles Barrett Elementary School on Friday, January 18. Chief Gleeson talked with the first graders about the duties of the Sheriff's Office and then distributed deputy sheriff star stickers and activity books. Deputy O'Hara introduced his K9 partner Sherman and answered questions from the Daisies about Sherman's work as an explosives detector dog.



On Wednesday, January 30, Community Relations Deputy Valarie Wright and Deputy William Durham assisted the Department of Community and Human Services with the Point-In-Time or PIT count, an annual nationwide survey conducted to determine the number of adults and families experiencing homelessness within a particular jurisdiction. The purpose of the PIT count is to identify and improve services and resources to assist the homeless population. Deputy Durham and Deputy Wright (far right with flashlight) joined Officer Bennie Evans (upper left) and other volunteers and City staff with this effort and distributed food, clothing, blankets and other supplies to those who needed them.

In Touch With Our Community

The T.C. Williams girls' basketball team honored breast cancer survivors at the third annual Pink Zone event on Tuesday, February 5. Before tip-off, Coach Kesha Walton presented survivors (below, l-r:) Sergeant Lynn Oliver, Deputy Valarie Wright and Lieutenant Monique Rea, and her own mother Eva Walton with pink carnations and courtside seats to see the Titans take on Lake Braddock.



Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and members of his Office accompanied the Easter Bunny, portrayed by Winchester Sheriff Leonard Millholland, to Inova Alexandria Hospital on Wednesday, March 27, for the Office's annual visit. Carrying a basket of stuffed bunnies adorned with hearts and the printed message "Some Bunny Loves Me," Deputy Valarie Wright, Latoscha Pierce and Tiffany Searcy helped the Easter Bunny spread cheer to patients, visitors, staff and volunteers. This annual event is sponsored by the Easter Bunny Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a personal visit and a toy from the Easter Bunny during the week of Easter to children in hospitals.

New CIT Members

Four more members of the Sheriff's Office are now part the City's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) after they completed a week of training at police headquarters in February.



Dr. Cortnee Webb, Deputy Earlene Pierre, Deputy Myrna Juarez and Deputy Roy Hopson (above with Sheriff Dana Lawhorne) along with colleagues from the Police Department, Fire Department, Code Administration, and Probation and Parole received specialized training in how to recognize psychiatric and substance abuse disorders and how to best respond.

CIT was developed in collaboration with the Department of Community and Human Services, Police Department, and Sheriff's Office to improve staff interactions and outcomes with people with mental illness and substance use disorders. Through their 40 hours of training, CIT members learn skills such as suicide intervention, verbal de-escalation techniques, the role of the family in the care of a person with mental illness, and legal training in mental health and substance abuse issues. CIT members participated in role playing exercises based on real-life scenarios and spent a day visiting mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities.

More than 50 Sheriff's Office employees have completed CIT training and now use their skills in the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center, at the Alexandria Courthouse and in the community.

Partnering to Protect Kids

The Sheriff's Office recently joined a multi-agency partnership headed up by the Alexandria Police Department to provide families with SafeAssured Child Identification kits. This new project which also includes the Department of Community and Human Services and the Center for Alexandria's Children, Inc., provides SafeAssured ID kits to families of children age 16 and younger who attend a free SafeAssured Child Identification event.

Community Relations Deputy Valarie Wright joined representatives from the other groups at the first event at police headquarters on Saturday, February 2. She and other volunteers photographed and videotaped children, scanned their fingerprints and added important information that would be



Photo: Mike Reidel

needed by law enforcement and the news media in the event a child went missing. Parents then received completed, ready-to-use ID kits for their children, along with a photo data card and prevention tips.

Additional events were held on Saturday, February 23 and on Saturday, March 16.

New Deputies Sworn In at Courthouse

Six new deputies joined the Sheriff's Office on Friday, March 15. Clerk of the Circuit Court Edward Semonian (far left) administered the oath of office to (left to right) to Dorian Shelley, Jeffrey Halaut, Jr., Marko Nikolic, Andrew S. Brunsting, John R. Kayajanian, Jr., and Timothy Wauhup at the Alexandria Courthouse. The group also received their badges and credentials that day.

The deputies, along with a new civilian employee, Gregorianne Burrus, began New Employee Training the following week. The deputies then started several weeks of additional training at the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center. They will attend deputy and law enforcement schools at the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy this year.



Partners in “Kick Butts” Campaign

The Sheriff’s Office participated in the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria’s Operation Storefront event on Wednesday, March 20. As part of Kick Butts Day, Alexandria teens visited stores across the City to document how tobacco and adult beverages are promoted through displays and ads.

Community Relations Deputy Valarie Wright, a SAPCA board member, escorted four T.C. Williams High School students (below l-r: Krystyna Derevyanko, Deputy Wright, Jemila Deida, Katheryn Alvarez and Fatimata Bonsa) to stores in Old Town, while other teams of adults and young people covered other neighborhoods.

As part of Operation Storefront, designed to raise awareness of how tobacco and some alcoholic and caffeinated beverages are marketed, students completed surveys by noting how these products are advertised at local stores.

They started off by checking for ads on doors and windows that would be visible outside the stores. Inside, students recorded how these products were



promoted with ads and displays and noted if they were placed near candy or at points-of-purchase, places where they were likely to attract the attention of young customers.

Alexandria’s Operation Storefront survey was one of 1,300 special events across the country and on U.S. military bases around the world held for Kick Butts Day. The student participants were recognized by Mayor William D. Euille and members of City Council during a Council meeting later in the spring.



Jaycees Honor Deputy

Each year the Alexandria Jaycees recognize City employees for their outstanding service in the workplace and in the community. On Thursday, March 14, Jaycees President Jackie Huelbig and Chief Deputy Tim Gleeson presented Deputy Sheriff Marybeth Plaskus with the 2013 William G. Truesdale Award during a reception and ceremony at City Hall.



Deputy Plaskus, who was joined by her fiancée Alexandria Police Officer Dan Rutz and her brother Rick Plaskus, was honored for her achievements at work and with young people in the community.

After joining the Sheriff’s Office in 2008, Deputy Plaskus began working in the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center but she also took on additional responsibilities, as a Field Training Deputy, a technician and trainer for Project Lifesaver, and a member of the Crisis Negotiation Team. She is now assigned to Special Operations.

In her off-duty time, she volunteers as an assistant volleyball coach at Woodbridge High School and serves as a mentor, teaching her girls the rules of volleyball as well as valuable life lessons.

Matt Bosse of the Fire Department, Ryan Touhill of the Human Resources Department, and Tonia Copeland of the Police Department also received awards.

Programs Highlight Education, Diversity

Throughout the year, the Sheriff's Office provides educational and cultural diversity programs to inmates.



In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, Dr. Jimmie McClellan, the Dean of Liberal Arts at Northern Virginia Community College's Alexandria Campus, visited the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center to give a lecture on Civil Rights history on Thursday, January 24.

Dr. McClellan (above), who taught an African American history course for student-inmates as part of the Sheriff's Office and NOVA's Open Roads program last summer, discussed the evolution of Civil Rights in the United States, from Reconstruction and the Jim Crow-era to the succession of Civil Rights victories including *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery Bus Boycott and passage of federal Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s.

Then on Thursday, March 21, the Sheriff's Office staff hosted a ceremony to honor the educational accomplishments of 14 inmates.

Guest speaker Pastor Louis Whiting of My Father's House Christian Ministries (below) addressed graduates, inmates and staff, and shared his thoughts on faith and conflict. Education coordinator Krista Sofonia presented six inmates with Certificates of Achievement for passing their General Educational Development examinations. Nadia Ahmed, Bill Clinton Bonanjah, David Flowers, Jalen Ford, Jonathan Fuentes and one inmate who did not want his identity published wore caps and gowns and were cheered by family members attending the ceremony. Another inmate who was released before the ceremony also passed his GED exam. Ms. Sofonia acknowledged the work of GED volunteers, including Mellisha Bedminster, a graduate student at Marymount University, who did an internship at the Detention Center.

Seven other inmates donned chef's hats as they were recognized for earning their ServSafe® Food Protection Manager Certification, a nationally-recognized certification which will make them more competitive candidates for food service and restaurant employment opportunities. Some of these inmates are already working in the Detention Center cafeteria.



VTS Students Minister at ADC

Graduate students at the Virginia Theological Seminary interned at the Sheriff's Office this winter.



Thomas Allain (at lectern) and Carlos de la Torre (at far right) worked with Chaplain Myron Contee (center) at the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center. They ministered to inmates and conducted Bible study classes as part of their internship experience.



CREDITS

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